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ABSTRACT

This booklet, one of a series featuring the Canadian provinces, presents a brief overview of Ontario and is suitable for teacher reference or student reading. Separate sections discuss geography, climate, history, agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, manufacturing, transportation, energy, arts and culture, sports and recreation, and people and government. Specific topics include the Great Lakes, three main physical regions, and climate. A description of the lifestyles of the Petun and Huron Indians is followed by a discussion of the historic French-British struggle, boundary divisions, the emergence of nationalistic sentiment, European immigration, and the early development of the railways, lumber trade, and water routes in the province. The importance of the country's agriculture and livestock production, forestry, fishing, mining, and manufacturing is also emphasized. The development of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, international airports, the St. Lawrence Seaway, and hydroelectric and nuclear energy are seen as major contributors to Ontario's economic development. Also discussed is Ontario's attraction as a cultural center for the arts and as a recreational center for professional and amateur sports. The final section describes the country's population, languages, and government structure. In addition, a simple map showing Canada's major cities and provinces is included. (LH)

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Ontario

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Ontario, the most populous of Canada's ten provinces – 8.6 million people out of the country's 24 million – is the second largest in size, covering more than a million square kilometres. Although it is larger in area than France and Spain combined, 90 per cent of Ontario's population lives in the southern 14 per cent of the province's land surface.

Economically, Ontario is the industrial heart of the country, producing nearly half of Canada's manufactured goods, 37 per cent of its total exports and 68 per cent of its fully manufactured exports. It accounts for 38 per cent of Canada's gross national product and its consumers control 37 per cent of the country's spending power.

Transportation links include complex road and rail networks and the St. Lawrence Seaway, by which ocean-going ships have access not only to industry but to the interior of North America *via* the Great Lakes. The waterways have been vital in the development of Ontario's rich resources, particularly minerals and forests.

The province possesses great cultural diversity in its many prosperous cities, as well as great natural beauty throughout – farmland, lake country and seemingly unlimited wilderness.

Geography and climate

The Great Lakes are the most visible result of the ice age in Ontario and the biggest, Lake Superior, is the world's largest body of fresh water. All but one of the Great Lakes border Ontario and the province has a freshwater shore nearly 4 000 kilometres long. There are also 1 000 kilometres of saltwater coastline along Hudson Bay.

Excluding the Great Lakes, nearly one-fifth of Ontario's surface is water. Most of the rest is covered by deciduous hardwood forests in the south and by immense expanses of coniferous softwoods in the north. The Rainy River/Dryden area in northern Ontario is rich in timber resources and the waterways are used to transport pulpwood to nearby mills.

There are three main physical regions in Ontario – the Hudson Bay Lowlands, the Canadian Shield and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Lowlands.

The Hudson Bay Lowlands are narrow coastal plains bordering Hudson Bay and James Bay. The land is wet and boggy and covered by scrub growth. The Canadian Shield, a vast rocky plateau covering the rest of northern Ontario, extends into the southern part of the province. Some of the oldest land on earth is found here. Although the soil is fine and not well suited for large-scale farming, there is a wealth of minerals, forests and water power.

The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Lowlands comprise the rest of southern Ontario and contain most of the population, industry, commerce and agricultural land.

Ontario's climate ranges from humid continental in the south to subarctic in the north. The Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River form the province's southern boundary; Hudson Bay and James Bay the northern boundary. These bodies of water cool the summer, lessen the severity of winter, delay autumn frosts and reduce the difference between day and night time temperatures. The cold polar air sweeping down from the north and the warm moist air flowing north from the Mississippi River give Ontario adequate precipitation throughout the year.

History

In the early seventeenth century, the region between Georgian Bay and Lake Simcoe was inhabited by the Huron Indians and their neighbours, the Petuns. These tribes lived in large bark-covered longhouses within fortified villages. Their loose grouping of family-linked bands subsisted by cultivating fields of Indian corn. To the east, the nomadic Algonquian-speaking tribes relied on hunting and fishing for their livelihood. The Hurons and Petuns numbered about 25 000 – a match for their arch rivals, the Iroquois, south of Lake Ontario.

Following the founding of Quebec City in 1608 by the French explorer Samuel de Champlain, the Hurons travelled to the colony by river to trade beaver pelts. Over the next century Ontario's waterways were used extensively by explorers, fur traders, missionaries and soldiers, but there was little permanent settlement. Intense rivalry developed between British and French fur traders however, and in 1749, the French built Fort Toronto at the mouth of the Humber River in an effort to prevent Indians from trading with the British at Oswego on Lake Ontario's southern shore.

During the American Revolution, the United Empire Loyalists in the American colonies who preferred British rule to independence, began to move into the Niagara Peninsula. After the war, Loyalist immigration increased and surveyors found it difficult to keep ahead of them as they took up British land grants. Settlement spread eastward along Lake Ontario's northern border and the St. Lawrence shore and westward as part of the general movement to the West.

The new English-speaking settlers were accustomed to representative institutions and demanded them in their new province. In 1791, the British Parliament passed the Constitutional Act, which divided Quebec along the Ottawa River into Upper (Ontario) and Lower (Quebec)

Canada and set up assemblies in both parts. Upper Canada's first lieutenant-governor, Lord Simcoe, chose York (later Toronto) as the site of a capital for Upper Canada because it was separated from the United States by an expanse of water.

The War of 1812 between Britain and the United States tested the loyalties of Upper Canada's population of some 100 000 people, four-fifths of whom had come from the United States. British forces, supported by the Indians, rallied the inhabitants and repelled successive invasions by the United States. Isaac Brock, the British commander, and the Indian chief Techumseh were killed during the fighting. While the treaty of Ghent, signed in 1814, did not change the status of the combatants, the war was important in the colonies because it marked the emergence of nationalistic sentiments in Canada.

After the Napoleonic Wars, British authorities began encouraging overseas settlement. Former soldiers and officers, adventurers and tradesmen were given equipment and grants of land. Scottish crofters, Irish peasants and British urban dwellers came in large numbers in the 1820s, filling the St. Lawrence back country and taking up plots along the Ottawa River, in the Toronto area and in the rich agricultural land to the west. During the 1830s and 1840s, thousands of starving refugees came from overcrowded European cities.

Several uprisings, led by Scottish newspaper editor William Lyon Mackenzie, were inspired by agitation for responsible government in Upper Canada. Rebellions in both Upper and Lower Canada in 1837 led to the Act of Union, which combined Canada East (Quebec) and Canada West (Ontario) under one governor, council and elected assembly. Reform parties were elected to power in 1848 and under Robert Baldwin in Ontario and Louis Lafontaine in Quebec, the two provinces advanced towards responsible government.

By the 1860s there were 1.5 million inhabitants in Ontario. Cornwall, Prescott, Brockville, Gananoque and Kingston were prosperous ports on the St. Lawrence. Farms and orchards covered the Niagara Peninsula and the growing population provided a ready market for tradesmen and manufacturers. Mineral resources were plentiful and water power was available from streams and rivers.

From an early stage, the government supported construction of water-powered grain, wood and sawmills and made generous loans to those willing to build and operate them. This growth of trade and commerce was supported by an expanding transportation network. The 40-lock Welland Canal was completed in

the 1830s to bypass the Niagara Falls, and some railway lines were being constructed to connect landlocked centres with ports. A significant manufacturing industry was created by the production of mechanical reapers and other tools for the wheat harvests. A fresh-water fishery was established on the Great Lakes and, in the north, trapping and the mining of copper, silver and iron ore was conducted. The land over the Laurentian Shield, unsuitable for farming, yielded great forest products and northern lumbering became a staple trade.

Bytown, the centre of the lumber trade, was renamed Ottawa and, in 1867, became capital of the new Canadian Confederation. A city of 15 000, its location was as appealing as York's had been, because of its safe distance from the American border and because it bordered the French and English societies of Quebec and Ontario. It was connected with Lake Ontario at Kingston by the Rideau Canal, which was built after the War of 1812.

The Welland Canal, linking Lake Erie with Lake Ontario and the Rideau Canal, provided a protected route for trade as well as defence. The St. Lawrence River was an essential part of the route until railways overtook water routes as trade arteries. The major construction of railway lines occurred during the 1850s and the 1860s and they determined the success or failure of many Ontario towns.

Toronto, well served by both water and rail, dominated the province's industry and commerce and remained its intellectual and political centre. London prospered on the rich wheatlands of western Ontario, and Hamilton competed for the flow of grain and trade on Lake Ontario. There, iron and metal works, precursors of today's giant steel plants, grew and prospered.

The Confederation of Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in 1867 brought industrial and political advantage to Ontario. The extension of the railways, promised to the Maritimes and planned for the West, favoured Ontario's trade and industrial growth, as did the development of the St. Lawrence. Confederation gave Ontario the largest share of federal votes because of representation by population and also provided for separate provincial legislatures, giving Ontario a strong voice in its own affairs.

Agriculture

Ontario's agricultural base is broader than that of any other province. Some 100 products, ranging from grain and livestock to tobacco and grapes, are grown. The fertile soils of the southwest, the St. Lawrence

Lowlands and the Niagara Peninsula have produced abundant fruit and vegetable harvests. Several counties grow tobacco and soybeans.

A steady expansion of southern Ontario's cornlands has occurred in recent years with the introduction of robust hybrid varieties. Because of mechanization and a trend toward specialization, farms in Ontario have become very productive. In 1980, net farm income was an estimated $632 million. Approximately two-thirds of this is from livestock and livestock products such as milk and eggs; this accounts for more than one-third of Canada's total output.

There are many dairy cattle herds in Ontario. Since 1965, the number of beef cattle has doubled and the typical Ontario dairy herd has at least 40 cows. Ontario, Canada's leading producer of swine, is a major poultry producer.

A wide variety of vegetables is grown in southwestern Ontario. The showpiece of Ontario agriculture, the fruit-growing area of the Niagara Peninsula, is well known for its apples, grapes and peaches. Berries include blackberries, blueberries, grapes, strawberries and raspberries. The Niagara Peninsula produces both table grapes and the more prolific wine grapes which are picked by mechanical harvesters.

In 1811, John McIntosh, a Scottish immigrant, found 20 wild apple trees on his land in eastern Ontario. From these he developed the McIntosh apple which now accounts for nearly 50 per cent of Canada's apple crop.

Forestry

From the time of the great log drives in the nineteenth century, Ontario, with British Columbia and Quebec, has been an important producer of forest products. The province exports more than 20 per cent of Canadian paper and 20 per cent of all fabricated wood products. Nine-tenths of Ontario's forest land (68 million hectares) is owned and managed by the provincial government, but most of the timber stands are cut and processed by private corporations under licence.

Today, every corporation harvesting Crown timber must respect the area's "sustained yield" – that is, no more timber may be cut each year than the forest can produce. Forest companies must pay "stumpage" on their harvest as well as an annual fee for forest protection and management.

By value, Ontario's most important wood product is newsprint; the province accounts for 20 per cent of Canada's output. Most is exported to the United States. There are more than 1 200 wood-mills in Ontario, and the processing of forest products employs approximately 80 000 people.

Fishing

Ontario commercial fishing is modest compared to that of the coastal provinces. The widely scattered industry is concentrated in Lake Erie, the shallowest and warmest of the Great Lakes, where 90 per cent of all Ontario fish are harvested. More than 350 smaller inland lakes, mainly in northwestern Ontario, are also fished commercially. The province has 2 000 fishermen and 900 other workers engaged in processing and handling.

Among the species harvested are yellow perch, smelt, white fish, pickerel, pike, lake trout, herring, chub and carp. The commercial fishing industry contributes $34 million to the Canadian economy. Ontario's freshwater area of approximately 177 000 square kilometres also attracts extensive sport fishing.

Mining

The rich base-metal potential of the Canadian Shield was recognized long before serious attempts were made to exploit it. With the opening and development of mines, especially since the Second World War, Ontario has become the country's leading mining province.

North of Lake Huron, Elliot Lake became one of the most productive uranium mining areas in the world after deposits were found in the area in 1952. It is still a leading source of the mineral.

In the 1960s, when the gold supply was being depleted from the original mine in the Porcupine Lake area, considerable deposits of copper and zinc were found nearby. Since then, other base-metal mines have started production. Among them are several iron ore mines. Most are open pit mines, like those at Steep Rock, where a lake was drained to allow access to the ore body.

Under Lake Huron, near Goderich, miners quarry Canada's most extensive deposits of rock salt. And the Sudbury Basin provides more than one-third of the world's nickel, two-fifths of Canada's copper and the western world's largest supply of platinum and related metals. The value of mineral production in Ontario in 1980 was an estimated $4.7 billion.

Manufacturing

Around the western shores of Lake Ontario are the rich industrial communities called the "Golden Horseshoe". Forty per cent of Ontario's population lives in this industrial band, which includes metropolitan Toronto (population 2.2 million) Hamilton (306 000), Burlington, (114 000), Oshawa (116 000) and Oakville (75 000). With over half of Canada's 650 000 small businesses, and much large-scale industry, Ontario is appropriately called Canada's business province. Hamilton's

steel-works, for example, produce about 60 per cent of Canada's steel requirements in the transportation, construction, appliance and domestic hardware industries. An estimated one-third of Canada's consumer market lies within 160 kilometres of downtown Toronto.

Until the Great Depression, Canada was the world's second largest automotive manufacturer. Today, Canada's auto industry is centred on the 1965 Automotive Agreement between Canada and the United States. The pact allows for the duty-free import and export of vehicles and parts between the two countries. Since 1965, the total trade of automotive products with the United States has been some $150 billion. The industry employs more than 76 000 workers in Ontario and accounts for some $13.4 billion every year. This represents approximately 5 per cent of Canada's gross national product.

The ten leading manufacturing sectors in Ontario are: transportation equipment; food and beverage; primary metal; metal fabricating; electrical products; chemicals and chemical products; paper and allied industries; machinery; printing, publishing and allied industries; and rubber and plastic products.

A key sector of the manufacturing industry is food and beverages. The milling industry processes wheat, oats, barley, rye and corn from Ontario and the western provinces. Several industries are dependent on these mills for their raw materials, notably bakeries, cookie manufacturers and cereal producers. Industrial milk is used to make cheese, which is the basis for one of Ontario's oldest established industries. The vegetable industry is located in southwestern Ontario, in the heart of the agricultural district.

Manufacturing in Ontario accounts for 72 per cent of the province's total industrial output and for 50 per cent of the country's total manufacturing. The province's prime location, with easy access to markets and transportation routes, ensures it a prominent place in Canada's future.

Transportation

The rugged country north and northeast of Lake Superior has always been a formidable barrier between eastern and western Canada. The area contains thousands of lakes and the dense rock of the Canadian Shield. In the 1880s it drove the builders of the Canadian Pacific Railway to despair and almost to bankruptcy. It was the construction of the railway through this territory that opened western Canada to settlement and economic development and thereby brought the far-flung colonies into union. Today there are over 16 000 kilometres of track and some 155 000 kilometres of road throughout Ontario.

The province's two international airports are at Toronto and Ottawa. Light aircraft remain, in some cases, lifelines to remote northern communities. The provincial government has built a network of all-weather landing strips throughout northern Ontario. While air transportation is vital in northern Ontario, the principal means of passenger transportation in the south is still the motor vehicle. In 1979, new motor vehicle registrations averaged approximately 40 000 a month.

The waterway from Montreal to Lake Superior links the heart of North America with the Atlantic and the world beyond. The St. Lawrence Seaway is one of the world's busiest shipping routes. It opened in 1959 and extends approximately 3 800 kilometres. Ships making a complete passage of the Seaway must pass through locks in the St. Lawrence section, eight more in the Welland section and must use one of four parallel locks at Sault Ste. Marie. Special "lakers" designed to fit snugly in the locks, carry the two staple cargoes of the Seaway – iron ore and grain. General cargo is also shipped to and from the industrial ports served by the Seaway, which is icebound for about four months of the year.

Energy

Cheap energy has been a major factor in Ontario's prosperity. Hydroelectric power is essential to the industrial processing of the province's natural resources. Ontario uses more electric power than any other province and has almost reached the limit of its hydroelectric capacity. Thermal power now accounts for 65 per cent of the province's electricity and it is expected to increase. Power stations burning fossil fuels like coal and oil provide extra power during peak demand periods.

In the years following the Second World War, the National Research Council and subsequently the Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, developed the technology for the CANDU nuclear reactor. Ontario has two major nuclear power plants in operation. The Pickering station, 28 kilometres east of Toronto, which opened in 1971, with four reactors, is the world's largest commercial nuclear power facility.

Arts and culture

Before the First World War, a group of Toronto artists began experimenting with a new style of painting in the wilds of Algonquin Park, north of Toronto. J.E.H. MacDonald, Frederick Varley, Arthur Lismer, Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson, Tom Thomson, Frank Johnston and Franklin Carmichael together established a landmark in the history of Canadian creative arts. Their bold use of colours and their depiction of the Canadian wilderness

inspired a new confidence in Canadian artists and marked a break with the European tradition in Canadian painting. During the 1950s, Toronto became the main centre in Ontario for modern abstract art and the Painters Eleven, including Jack Bush, William Ronald and Harold Town organized themselves there to promote their works.

In literature, Ontario has a tradition of eminent writers, several of whom established important reputations earlier in the century: Stephen Leacock, who wrote about the humorous foibles of the residents of the fictional town of Mariposa; Mazo De la Roche, whose best-selling novels about the Whiteoaks of Jalna were translated into many languages; and Morley Callaghan, whose renown began in Paris in the 1920s, and who is still a major literary force today. Among contemporary Ontario writers whose works attract strong followings are Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro, Margaret Atwood and Robertson Davies. Two noted Ontario scholars whose writing and thinking have influenced many are Marshall McLuhan, communications theorist, and Northrop Frye, eminent literary critic. Both came to prominence at the University of Toronto, one of the foremost universities in North America.

Because Toronto is the most populous of English-speaking Canadian cities, it is at the centre of Canadian artistic and cultural activity. As the centre of English-language publishing, broadcasting and the live arts, it is the communications capital of the country. Toronto is home of the National Ballet of Canada, the Canadian Opera Company and many professional theatre companies.

Most other Ontario cities have professional theatre companies, one of the largest being that of the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. In addition there are many regional theatres including the renowned Stratford Festival, which attracts nearly half a million visitors from Canada and abroad each year. The festival stages Shakespearean plays as well as plays by Canadian and other authors and also features concerts of orchestral, chamber, folk and jazz music.

Smaller towns benefit from theatrical and other artistic tours financed and organized by government agencies like the Ontario Arts Council, established to promote the arts and make them accessible to the entire population.

Production facilities of Canada's two national English language television networks, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the Canadian Television Network are located in Toronto. Each provides a full schedule of programs for network-owned and operated stations or for local affiliates. Global Television, a regional network, and TV Ontario, a

provincial educational network, are also located in Toronto.

National network productions from Toronto studios are beamed to other major centres by Canada's ANIK satellites and are distributed regionally by microwave links. To coordinate them across Canada's six time zones, programs beamed from Toronto are taped and delayed for broadcast in the western provinces.

The Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Ontario Science Centre are among the many public institutions in Ontario which house cultural treasures. The government also supports hundreds of cultural and recreational events in towns and cities across the province.

Sports and recreation

Spectator sports are a big business and a popular pastime in Ontario. In hockey, the professional Toronto Maple Leafs have shared national billing with their arch-rivals, the Montreal Canadiens, for years. Canadian football remains a strong favourite during the summer and fall with three professional teams – the Toronto Argonauts, the Ottawa Rough Riders and the Hamilton Tiger Cats being supported. The Toronto Blue Jays compete in the North American professional baseball league.

Participation in amateur sports is also growing owing to an increased interest in fitness as well as to the excitement of competition. Since sports facilities are expensive, a large part of the funding for tracks, courts, pools, and arenas is provided by the federal and provincial governments.

For recreation, Ontario boasts more than 250 000 lakes that attract tourists. The focus of much of this tourist activity is the system of 132 parks in the province. Among other popular features are Niagara Falls (Ontario's leading tourist attraction), Ontario Place (a summer entertainment park on the Toronto waterfront) and Ottawa's annual Tulip Festival.

People and government

The 8.6 million people living in Ontario comprise some 36 per cent of the country's population. The southern part of the province especially, has drawn Canadians from across the country, as well as 50 000 immigrants every year and as a consequence, this area – especially Toronto – has become a truly multicultural society. Its Italian community numbers nearly half a million, the Black and Chinese each approximately 100 000.

Ontario's cultural mosaic is also made up of communities with deep roots in the province: the English, Scottish and Irish as well as the French, who number half a million and are concentrated in the north

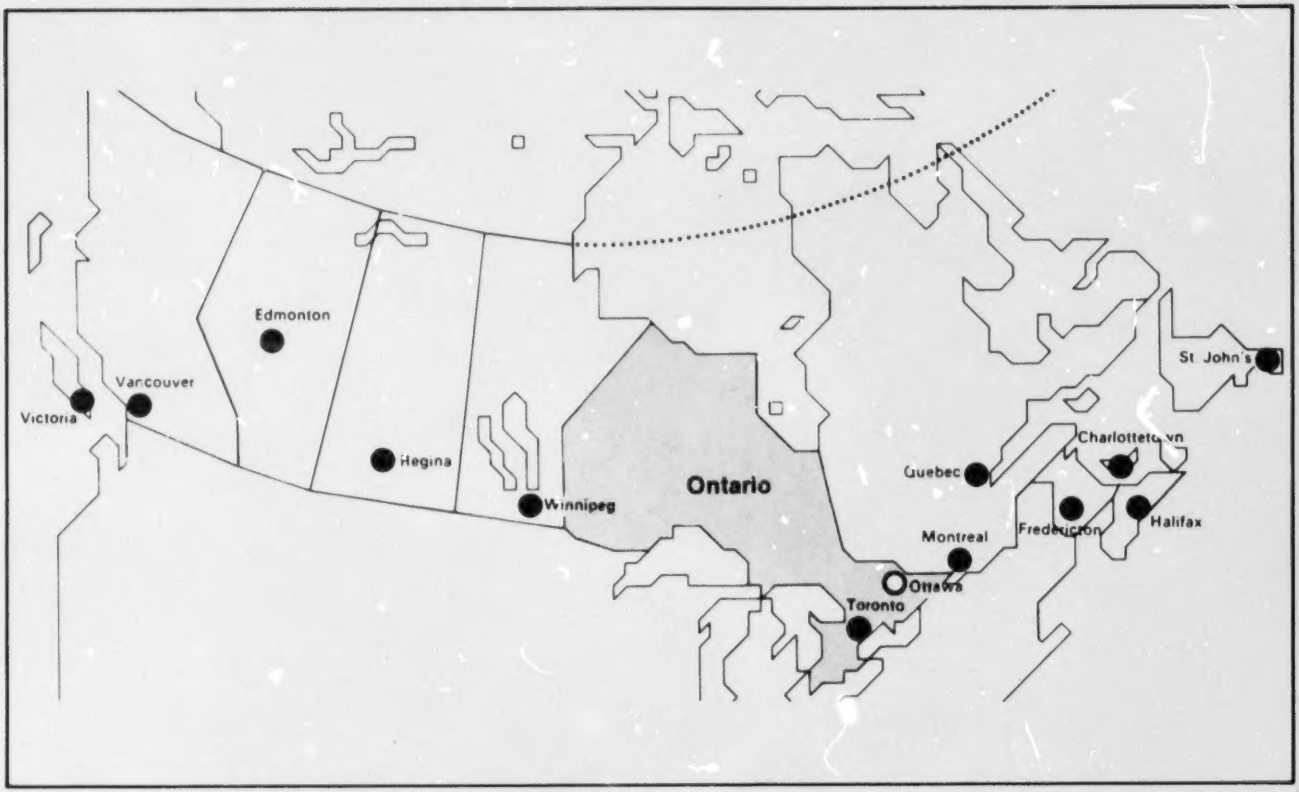
and east, and native Indians, who number some 20 000.

While most Canadians speak English or French (the two official languages of the country), many "third" languages enjoy wide use, especially in Ontario. Street signs in Toronto's "Chinatown", for example, are in English and Chinese. And the city has multilingual radio and television, which provide invaluable service to southern Ontario's many cultural communities.

The business of governing Ontario is centred in two cities: Ottawa is the national capital, where 95 of the 282 members of the House of Commons represent Ontario constituencies; and Toronto is the seat of the provincial government, which, like its federal counterpart, is parliamentary in nature. The provincial legislature at Queen's Park, in the heart of Toronto, has 125 representatives. Elections are held at least every five years. The governing party in Ontario since 1943 has been the Progressive Conservative Party, at present under the leadership of the Honourable William Davis. The opposition parties, of roughly equivalent strength, are the Liberals and the New Democrats.

Provincial governments in Canada have considerable authority, much of which is derived from the fact that, as a group, they now account for some 60 per cent of all public spending. Much of Ontario's government spending goes to social services. Health and education each account for a quarter of the total; social security (a jurisdiction shared with the federal government) and community services (the province has responsibility over municipal affairs) account for 10 per cent.

As economic hub and multiculturalism cosmopolis, Ontario occupies a unique place in Canadian society. And it promises to continue doing so.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